Finalisation of the Ninth Five Year Plan for Power Sector

1330. DR. MANMOHAN SINGH: Will the Minister of POWER be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have finalised the Ninth Five Year Plan for the power sector;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) what steps are being contemplated to ensure that the Ninth Plan performance will not be a repeat of the Eighth Plan performance?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY AND THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF POWER (SHRI YOGINDER K. ALAGH): (a) and (b) The Ninth Five Year Plan (1997—2002) for power sector is under finalisation in Planning Commission.

(c) Achievement of target for capacity addition in the Ninth Plan is proposed to be ensured through several measures including improved monitoring systems, priority to ongoing sanctioned schemes streamlining and simplifying the clearance procedures and reforms and restructuring of the State Electricity Boards. Government proposes to introduce bills relating to Regulatory Commissions at the Central an,d State levels during the current session of Parliament. Legislation for facilitating private sector investment in the transmission sector is already with the Standing Committee of Parliament. The State Governments have also been urged to take up implementation of the Common Minimum National Action Plan on power in a time bound manner.

Electrification of Villages

1331. DR. B.B. DUTTA: Will the Minister of POWER be pleased to state:

(a) the total number of villages electrified as on 31st March, 1997 in different States and Union Territories;

(b) whether any assessment has been made by Government about the impact of electrification on the rural economy;

(c) which States and Union Territories are below national average of rural electrification and what are the reasons therefor;

(d) what percentage of the rural population in each State/Union Territory has been covered by electrification so far; and

(e) to what extent loan assistance has been given by the Centre to the backward States for rural electrification programmes and how far these loans have been utilised?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY AND THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF POWER (SHRI YOGINDER K. ALAGH): (a) As per available information out of the 5,79,132 inhabited villages in all the States and Union Territories. 5,04,771 villages were electrified by the end of March. 1997.

(b) While no formal assessment has been made, the impact of electrification on the rural economy has been positive. Agricultural productivity has highly positive corelation with power driven pump sets. Electrification has contributed enormously to Rural Development in the creation of better minor irrigation facilities in rural areas thus mitigating drought conditions in the country and ensuring food self sufficiency. Electrification is one of the inputs that has contributed to the development of rural areas in the non-farm sector as well such as Rural and Cottage Industry, industries based on agro-products, textiles on i Account of powerloom and a large number of associated service sector.

(c) The level of village electrification in the States of Arunachal Pradesh,